5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

[1811 - 1917]

power, which gave him in effect the position of an autocratic monarch during the period of his viceroyalty. From 1882 to 1905 the administration was yet further centralised by the substitution for the Viceroy of a Governor-General, directly controlled by a Caucasian Committee at St. Petersburg. A civil Governor subordinate to the Viceroy or Governor-General ruled each Province, with the exception of those of Daghestan, Sukhum, Batum and Kars, where the Governor was a military officer. The Provinces were divided into districts, governed by officials bearing the title *nachalnik*, and the districts were divided into communes (*volost*), where the chief authority was a native elder (*volostnoi starshina*) elected by the community and assisted by a headman of each village (*starosh*). With regard to the law, small cases were tried by local magistrates; those involving more than 2,000 roubles by Russian judges in the district courts.

It will thus be seen that while the Russian administrative machine provided for a degree of local autonomy, the natives had no influence on the conduct of Caucasian or even of provincial affairs. But this system was suitable enough to the mass of the peasantry who, under native rule, had lain in still deeper servitude. The Tatar peasantry, particularly, after the termination of the national struggle for independence, reconciled themselves to Russian rule. The Georgian aristocracy, still inspired by some glimmerings of sentimental patriotism, and resenting at once the supremacy of the Russian bureaucracy, the decline of their own feudal powers, and the steady growth of an Armenian bourgeoisie, alone of all the elements in the Transcaucasus continued to foster a vivid resentment against the existing régime. The Russian policy of Russification, the chief incidents of which were the subjecting of the Georgian Autocephalous Church to the Holy Synod (1811) and the abolition of the autonomy of Svanetia (1833) and of Mingrelia (1867), roused them more than once to sporadic revolt. Thus risings, partly nationalist and partly agrarian in character, in which members of the nobility led the peasant bands, took place at different dates—in Imeretia (1821), in Guria (1822) and in Mingrelia (1857).

During the same period, and parallel with the political discontent, the patriotic literary revival, initiated during the previous century by Vakhtang VI and Prince Vakhusht, was developed, and a school arose of aristocratic journalists and poets, chief of whom were Alexander and Ilia Chavchavadze, Giorgi Eristavi (a Decabrist), Grigor Orbelian and Ivané

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Machabeli, who founded a daily paper. The style of this school was for the most part romantically patriotic, and it appealed primarily to the large and impoverished aristocratic class; but of all its disciples Ilia Chavchavadze alone had a following among the people. In general, the Russian Government had little to fear from the patriotic movement of the nobles; the majority of them served faithfully, some with distinction, in the Georgian regiments which played an important part in the Caucasian Campaign of 1877–8. Finally, the incorporation, in 1884, of the hitherto distinct Georgian army in the general military organisation of the Russian Empire marked the disappearance of the last remnant of the independence of the Georgian kingdom.

With the economic development of Transcaucasia the subversive social doctrines already spreading among the workmen of European Russia reached the Caucasus, and the Tiflis administration was confronted with a movement more real and more dangerous than the sentimental romanticism of the native princes. In 1870 European capital began to exploit Baku, and in the same year operations were begun at the great manganese deposits of Chiaturi. The construction of a railway line from Poti to Tiflis had been begun in 1867, and in 1883 this line was continued to Baku. In 1884 foreign capital, chiefly that of the Rothschilds, began to build a port at Batum. During the following thirty years the industrialisation of the Caucasus proceeded. Baku became one of the greatest petroleum centres of the world; further deposits of oil were exploited at Maikop and Grozni; another railway soon linked these towns with the Black Sea, the Caspian and Baku, and Russian, Armenian and foreign companies hastened to undertake the working of the rich manganese and copper deposits and the export of the silk, cotton, timber and wine of the country.

This sudden development soon produced the most complicated problems; antagonisms social and racial were presented in an acute form. The oil-towns were the foci of these antagonisms and the scene of the more sanguinary events of 1904–6, but the conditions there reacted on, and were reproduced in a lesser degree in, Georgia. Foreign capitalism was more than usually aggressive, as it believed itself to be operating in a new country where it was in a position to exploit cheap and inexhaustible supplies of uneducated native labour; and a sudden transition from feudalism to industrialism had created a labouring class the more dangerous because it could

of the Assyrians, who had led the great migration. These platonic expressions of sympathy were of little help to the Assyrians. Transcaucasia was soon drawn into the turmoil of revolution and civil war and there was no Russian authority in existence which could be interested in the fate of the Assyrian people. S.U. 563 Ca. 563

It is not our task to follow up the further calvary of the Assyrians in Iraq, their recruitment into the famous Assyrian levies and the massacres of 1933 – we are concerned here only with the Russian aspect of the problem. Whilst the centre of gravity of the Assyrian nation was in Iraq, where the Mar Shimun had his residence, Soviet government circles claimed that the largest single group of Assyrians lived in the U.S.S.R. and thus, from the Russian point of view, the Assyrians had become one of the peoples of the Soviet Union.[51]

In 1935 the number of Assyrians in Russia was officially estimated at 50,000-60,000, but the 1939 census recorded not more than 20,000. They occupied eight villages in Transcaucasia and had also small colonies in Krasnodar, Rostov, Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow, where at one time over 2,000 Assyrians were counted. In all these places the Assyrians had their own national schools, and a special Assyrian section was established in the Teachers' Training College in the North Caucasus town of Armavir. Soviet Assyrians were looked after by a special Assyrian organization, 'Khoyadto', which both attended to their cultural needs and directed their mobilization for socialistic reconstruction work. S.U. 563 162

The Soviet Government found it a hard task to reconcile the Assyrian people with Bolshevik ideology, in view of their deep attachment to their ancient Nestorian Church. In April 1933, a statement of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee complained about 'undermining activities' which class-alien exploiting elements were alleged to have carried out amongst Soviet Assyrians. These 'elements' were said to have penetrated into Assyrian collective farms and co-operatives in an attempt to dominate them. S.U. 563 771 Ca. 563 771

The régime also found fault with the communists and Communist Youth League members who had been recruited amongst the Assyrians in 'considerable numbers', for even Assyrian communists seemed to have kept faith with their nation and its rich traditions. In the middle of the thirties the authorities turned against a number of Assyrian communists who had proved to be 'prisoners of family ties', and who had defended 'class enemies' because of their Assyrian nationality. These 'communists' had denied the necessity of class struggle inside the Assyrian people since they could not see any class divisions within a nation which had concentrated all its energies on its survival.[52] Ca. 563 665 186

Soviet philologists also tried to replace the 'archaic' Syriac alphabet of the Assyrians. At first they gave them a Russian alphabet, then, in 1930, a Latin alphabet. This had to be revised two years later because it was 'unsuitable' and in the end the Russian alphabet was re-introduced. S.U. 563 212